

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 00306 201424Z

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ACTION NEA-12

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

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AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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SUBJECT: CAIRO PRESS ON DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT AND

SADAT'S TRAVELS

1. SUMMARY: CAIRO PRESS FOLLOWING AGREEMENT ON DISENGAGEMENT HAS REFLECTED PLEASED RELIEF, SOME OPTIMISM, AND DETERMINATION THAT DISENGAGEMENT ITSELF DOES NOT LIMIT EGYPTIAN MILITARY OPTION SHOULD THIS BE NECESSARY. JAN 20 PRESS, AND JAN 19 STATEMENT BY ASU FIRST SECRETARY GHANEM EMPHASIZE THAT AGREEMENT IS MILITARY AND NOT POLITICAL. END SUMMARY.

2. JAN 19 CAIRO PAPERS CARRIED MAJOR ARTICLES ON SIGNING OF AGREEMENT ON DISENGAGEMENT OF FORCES, AND PUBLISHED FULL TEXTS OF AGREEMENT, WITH SOME MODIFICATIONS (SEPTEL). ARTICLES COVERED SADAT'S QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION WITH EGYPTIAN PRESS, AND FINAL MEETING HE HELD JAN 18 WITH SECRETARY.

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PAGE 02 CAIRO 00306 201424Z

IN GENERAL, ARTICLES REFLECTED OPTIMISM THAT SIGNIFICANT STEP

TOWARD SETTLEMENT OF ME CONFLICT HAD BEEN ACHIEVED, AND THAT FURTHER MOVEMENT WOULD OCCUR: AHRAM'S HEADLINE QUOTED SADAT'S WORDS, "THE ISSUE HAS MOVED AND THERE IS NO RETURN TO THE STANDBSTILL." PRESS ALSO EMPHASIZED SADAT'S REMARKS ON HIS COMMITMENT TO SYRIA AND SYRIAN/ISRAEL DISENGAGEMENT. AHRAM EDITORIALIZED THAT AGREEMENT WAS PURELY MILITARY AND HAD NO POLITICAL CHARACTER, AND STATED THAT IT WAS ONLY A PRELIMINARY STEP TOWARD FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF SC RES 242. AKHBAR'S QUDDUS, WRITING FOR THE SECOND TIME SINCE LIBEL CASE WAS BROUGHT AGAINST HIM, SOUGHT TO STILL CRITICISM OF PLANS TO REOPEN SUEZ CANAL CITIES.

3. JAN 20 PRESS FOCUSES ON SADAT'S TRAVELS TO SAUDI ARABIA, DAMASCUS AND KUWAIT; PARTICULAR EMPHASIS IS PLACED ON HIS EIGHT-HOUR SESSION WITH AL-ASAD. PAPERS CARRY NO DETAILS OF CONTENTS OF DISCUSSION BUT REPORT THAT, ACCORDING TO INFORMED SOURCES, SADAT TOLD FEISAL THAT EGYPT IS COMMITTED TO THE DISENGAGEMENT OF FORCES ON THE SYRIAN FRONT. JAN 20 NEWS-PAPERS ALSO PUBLISH PRESS REPORTS FROM ARAB AND OTHER CAPITALS SUPPORTING AGREEMENT.

4. ALTHOUGH SADAT IS TRAVELING, EGYPT'S INTERNAL MACHINERY HAS BEGUN TO PREPARE FOR DISENGAGEMENT AND POST-DISENGAGEMENT POLICIES. ON JANUARY 19, ASU SECRETARIAT HELD EXTRAORDINARY MEETING UNDER HAFEZ GHANEM TO DISCUSS AGREEMENT AND ISSUED STATEMENT EMPHASIZING THAT AGREEMENT STIPULATED UNILATERAL MOVES ON PART OF ISRAEL TO WITHDRAW TO EAST BANK OF CANAL, BUT CONTAINING NO MENTION OF EGYPTIAN QUID FOR ISRAEL'S QUO. STATEMENT SAID USG CONTRIBUTED TO PEACE EFFORTS BUT EGYPTIAN VICTORIES IN OCTOBER WAR AND ARAB OIL PRESSURE CAUSED US TO ACT. AT JOINT MEETING OF ASU SECRETARIAT AND PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY PERMANENT COMMITTEE, GHANEM REPORTEDLY ALSO EMPHASIZED THAT AGREEMENT WAS MILITARY AND NOT POLITICAL.
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